

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

INTERNET WEBSITE PRIVACY POLICY STATEMENT

Welcome to the Office of the State Auditor's (OSA) Internet Website. Your personal privacy is a priority of this office. The goal of the OSA is to protect the privacy of your personal information in full compliance with and to the extent possible under the law. The purpose of this policy statement is to provide you, the user, with notice of what information we collect, what we do with the information, to whom it may be disseminated, and how you can access it. For your own protection, we specifically request that you read this Privacy Policy Statement and [Disclaimer Notice](#) before you use this site. We also suggest that you refer to our [Privacy Policy Definitions](#) whenever necessary. If at any time you do not consent to the privacy policy and practices of this website, you are instructed to exit this site immediately. This policy statement applies exclusively to the OSA website and not to any sites which may be linked to this site.

I. INFORMATION THE OSA COLLECTS;

OSA USE and DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION COLLECTED

The OSA Privacy Policy Statement is intended to enable you to make informed choices regarding your disclosure of any information, including personally identifiable information or highly sensitive information through the use of this website, including the OSA Information Line and Email. The OSA does not rent or sell any personally identifiable information collected through this website. The OSA does not disseminate the information collected and stored at this website to outside individuals or entities, except in accordance with the law and the provisions of this OSA Privacy Policy Statement.

A. The information the OSA collects and receives depends on what you, the user, do when you visit the OSA website.

Generally -

The OSA website does not generate, collect or use "[cookies](#)".

The OSA website does not collect "[personally identifiable information](#)". Nor do we ask or require that you provide or send any such information using the OSA website.

The OSA website does collect and store "[anonymous information](#)" which does not identify you as an individual. The OSA uses such anonymous information to assess the frequency of visits to this site, the popularity of its various functions and to help make the OSA website more useful. The OSA may store the information we collect indefinitely. The OSA does not match or trace any personally identifiable information with any anonymous information, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that doing so would provide information that is relevant and material to an ongoing criminal investigation...(criminal investigation exception.)

B. What the OSA does with the information we learn from you while you visit or use this site.

- 1. For your interest and convenience, the OSA website enables you to review and download certain OSA reports, documents, and forms:**

If you visit the OSA website to browse, review or download OSA reports, documents and forms available at this website, you are hereby informed that the OSA website does collect and store **anonymous information** in accordance with the provisions of this OSA Privacy Policy Statement.

- 2. For your interest and convenience, the OSA website provides the OSA Information Line:**

If you choose to identify yourself by using the OSA Website Information Line, you are hereby informed that the Information Line is an Email Application. You may use the Information Line to submit a request or to communicate information to the OSA.

The OSA does not collect **personally identifiable information** through this website unless you, the user, choose to submit such information to this office using email or the OSA Information Line at this site. Therefore, you, as the user, have complete control over the personally identifiable information, if any, which the OSA collects from you. Once you submit information to the OSA, its dissemination is governed by the [Public Records Law, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66, Section 10](#); the [Fair Information Practices Act, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66A](#); and other applicable laws and regulations. Although “[confidential information](#)” is not a public record under the law, to the extent that you provide the OSA with information that is a “public record,” not “personal data” or otherwise protected by the law, this information may be disclosed to a member of the public in response to a Public Records Request or Fair Information Practices Act Request. For this reason, we cannot offer you complete choice as to how the OSA will disseminate the information you submit

The information that you choose to submit to the OSA using the Information Line, will be disclosed to those OSA officials or employees on a ‘need to know’ basis, for the purpose of fulfilling their official duties and in order to respond to your requests, and the OSA’s legal and security obligations. Where appropriate and lawful, the OSA may provide the information you submit to the person or entity that is the subject of your inquiry, or to a government agency that is responsible for the matters referred to in your communication. However, except as stated in this policy, the OSA will not disclose or otherwise disseminate names, addresses or other personally identifiable information to other parties.

- 3. For your interest and convenience, this website provides links to other websites:**

If you link to an external website, you are hereby informed that the OSA website does collect and store **anonymous information** in accordance with the provisions of this OSA Privacy Policy Statement.

You are further informed, that once you link to an external website or to a document contained at an external website, you are subject to the privacy policy and practices of the external site for which the OSA is not responsible and over which the OSA has no control.

II. SECURITY

The OSA uses standard security measures to ensure that your personally identifiable or highly sensitive information is not lost, misused, altered or unintentionally destroyed. Users are informed that electronic mail is not secure, and a third party can intercept any information included in an email message. The OSA encourages users uncomfortable submitting information over the Internet using this type of application to call this office or to communicate information to the OSA by regular U.S. mail. For your own protection and security, the OSA recommends that you not communicate highly sensitive information to this office using the OSA Information Line.

III. CONTACT INFORMATION

You may contact this office with inquiries regarding personal privacy while using this website by telephone at (617) 727-6200 or by U.S. Mail to the STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE, One Ashburton Place, Room 1819, Boston, MA 02108. All inquiries should be directed to: John Parsons, Deputy Auditor of Legal Affairs – John.Parsons@sao.state.ma.us

IV. ACCESS TO INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM YOU

This website does not collect any personally identifiable information, except what, if any such information you, the user may send or communicate by email or using the OSA information line to the OSA. The Public Records Law and the Fair Information Practices Act provide you, the user, certain rights to obtain information about you that may be collected at this website. To learn more, please click on these laws, as referenced herein.

V. POLICY CHANGES

The OSA will post changes to this Privacy Policy Statement at least thirty (30) days before any such changes take effect. Any information the OSA collects under the current policy will remain subject to the terms of this policy. After any such changes take effect, all new information collected, if any, will be subject to the terms of the new policy.

Thank you for visiting the [OSA Internet Website Privacy Policy Statement](#). We recommend you visit our [Separate Disclaimer Notice](#). We hope this visit has been informative to you. We look forward to assisting you in the near future.

OSA INTERNET WEBSITE **PRIVACY POLICY DEFINITIONS**

Cookie. A small text file that a website can place or store on your computer's hard drive. A cookie transmits this information back to the website's computer, which generally is the only computer that can read it. A cookie file generally contains an identification number or unique information that allows the website to recognize you as you navigate through the website and also when you return to the site at some later date. For example, using a cookie, a website can track things such as your password, lists of web pages you have visited, the date when you last visited a specific web page or identify your session at a particular site. A cookie allows a website to store your preferences and to tailor its offerings to you. Cookies can also be used to track your browsing behavior on the web. You can prevent websites from placing cookies on your computer by using your browser's preference menu; however, disabling cookies may affect your ability to view or interact with some websites.

Personally identifiable information or **personal data** or **personal information**. Any information concerning an individual, which because of name, identifying number, mark or description can be readily associated with a particular individual or could be readily used, or in combination with other information reasonably used, to identify an individual personally, such as name, address, e-mail address, social security number, birth date, gender, bank account information, credit card information, medical information or "intimate details of a highly personal nature" such as marital status, paternity, substance abuse, government assistance, family disputes and reputation. **Personal identifiable information** or **personal data** or **personal information** also includes any individually identifiable information gathered from which judgments can be made about an individual's character, habits, avocations, finances, occupations, general reputation, credit, health or any other personal characteristics.

Anonymous Information. Information which does not identify you, the user, as an individual. Anonymous information which may be collected at this website may include: the domain and host from which you access the internet (i.e., web account you use: aol.com or mit.edu); if you linked to the OSA site from another website, the internet address of the website from which you directly accessed the OSA website; your computer's **Internet Protocol Address (IPA)**; the operating system and browsing software that you use to access this site; the date and time you access the OSA website; the pages you visit on this site; the number of bytes of information transmitted to you over the web from this site; and if you linked from the OSA website to another website, the internet address of the website (or document at the website) to which you linked.

Internet Protocol Address (IPA). An Internet protocol address is a series of numbers that identifies each computer and machine connected to the Internet. An IPA enables a server on a computer to send you a file that you have requested on the Internet. The IPA disclosed to the OSA may identify the computer from which you are accessing the Internet or a server owned by your Internet Service Provider. Because it is machine

specific, rather than person-specific, an IPA is not, in and of itself, personally identifiable information.

Confidential Information. By way of illustration, confidential information which is protected from disclosure and dissemination may include, but is not limited to, most: tax, wage report, child support, public assistance and whistleblower information, subject to lawful exceptions; for example, where there are reasonable grounds to believe such information is relevant and material to an ongoing criminal investigation. To learn more about what information may be confidential, you may visit: [Public Records: A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law](#)

OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR SEPARATE DISCLAIMER NOTICE

- All services and information provided through the OSA website are subject to change without notice.
- The OSA makes no claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, currency, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of this website and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in its contents. In any situation where the official printed publications of the OSA or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts differ from the text contained in this site (or its links to other Commonwealth website sources), the official printed publications take precedence.
- No warranty of any kind, implied, express or statutory, including but not limited to the warranties of non-infringement of third party rights, title, merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and freedom from computer virus, is given with respect to the OSA website or its links to other Internet resources.
- Reference in the OSA website to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade, firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement or recommendation by the OSA.

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